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THE LICENCE  
OF THE  
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF  
EDINBURGH.

1870.

CRAWFORD AND M'CABE, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

THE attention of the Council of the ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS of EDINBURGH, having been directed to some recent articles in THE LANCET, reflecting upon the conduct of the College in regard to the manner in which it bestowed its Licence to Practice at the time when that Licence was instituted, the Council have thought it right to lay before the Licentiates of the College, a Statement of the Facts of the case. In order to do so, they have decided to republish an 'Explanatory Minute,' issued by their predecessors in office, which sets forth most clearly, the considerations which influenced the College in electing Licentiates at that time. This Statement has remained unanswered; and is, in the opinion of the Council, unanswerable. As it may be interesting to the Licentiates to be made aware of the opinions entertained by THE LANCET at that time, the Council have appended an article published in that periodical, a week after the appearance of the Explanatory Minute.

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*Explanatory Minute of the Council of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, regarding the Licentiates of the College.*

THE Council of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, having observed that certain misconceptions and misrepresentations are extensively prevalent, relative to the recent creation of Licentiates by the College, deem it advisable to publish the following remarks on the subject.

I. The College has been repeatedly charged with having issued its licence to practise in a way calculated to lead to the assumption of the title of Doctor of Medicine by persons having no claim to it.

Nothing can be more groundless than this charge. The College has never, directly or indirectly, claimed the possession of any power to confer the title of Doctor; and applicants for its licence have been, in every instance in which inquiries were made on the subject, informed, in the most express terms, that no such title was granted by the College. If any erroneous impressions have arisen on the subject, they can have arisen only in consequence of the fact, that the College of Physicians of London at one time sanctioned the claim of its non-graduated Licentiates to the title of Doctor. No similar claim has ever been in any way put forward by the College in Edinburgh.

It may be a subject for discussion, by what conventional name the Licentiate of a College of Physicians is hereafter to be known. The College has not endeavoured to prejudge this question. The Council cannot be surprised that the power of conferring the title of 'Doctor' should be claimed as an exclusive right by the Universities, any more than that the practice of the College of Physicians of London should have appeared to some of the Edinburgh Licentiates to justify them in assuming a title of courtesy which undoubtedly is, in fact, employed with very little reserve. On the other hand, the designation of 'Physician' is still understood by many as one not applicable to the general practitioner. It is quite certain, however, that some name must be found for non-graduated Licentiates of a College of Physicians, shorter, and more conveniently distinctive, than their legal designation; and if it is not formally arranged by the Colleges what that name is to be, the public and the profession will take the matter into their own hands, and will establish an usage overriding all



formal objections that may be taken to the employment of one or other of these conventional titles.

II. The College has been charged with having compromised the dignity of a College of Physicians, by granting its licence to the general practitioner. This charge is obviously founded on the peculiar views of the London College, which has always refused to extend the powers conferred on it by Charter, so as to include amongst its Licentiates the larger number of the practitioners of England, and which thereby gave origin, in 1815, to the new and very peculiar licensing powers conferred by Act of Parliament upon the Apothecaries' Company.

The Edinburgh College has at no time participated in these views of the London College. On the contrary, the traditional policy of the Edinburgh College has been ever in favour of licensing the general practitioner; and on several occasions in the course of the last twenty years the College has engaged in negotiations with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for this purpose. If the College has hitherto failed to carry out this intention, it has been owing to the unsettled state of medical politics, and to consideration for the long-established privileges of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, which has for more than a hundred years devoted itself with great success to the improvement of medical education, and has granted a Diploma, deservedly held in high estimation, as implying an Examination in Medicine as well as Surgery.

It is important to observe, in relation to this subject, that there have been, for many years past, the following well-marked differences between the usages of England and Scotland. In England, owing to the powers committed to the Apothecaries' Company, the great majority of the general practitioners have been necessarily associated with that corporation. They have not been recognised by

the law as having a right to remuneration for strictly medical attendance, but only for drugs. They have been compelled, at the commencement of their career, to serve an apprenticeship, by which the trading habits of one generation have been handed down to the next. They have been, therefore, as regards their strictly legal status, tradesmen; the professional character being superadded by public opinion, or by the Diploma of Surgeon taken in addition to the Apothecaries' licence, this latter implying, legally, only a right to perform operations, and attend cases of pure surgery. The general practitioner in Scotland, on the other hand, has, with few exceptions, been for many years unconnected, both in name and in reality, with trade. Even when obliged by circumstances to dispense his own drugs, he has always been remunerated by a charge for attendance; for which he has been at all times able to call the law to his assistance in the character of surgeon. Although the Licentiate of a surgical corporation, he has, nevertheless, been invariably examined in Medicine, and has fulfilled a curriculum of strictly medical study. Where his means and opportunities permitted, he has often superadded to his surgical licence a Doctor's degree, as an additional recommendation to public favour. But in a large proportion of cases, the single qualification of Surgeon has been his passport at once to private practice, and to almost all public appointments not held by physicians, strictly so-called.

Thus, neither in Scotland nor in England have the Colleges of Physicians, hitherto, interfered with the education or examination of the mass of the profession. But this isolated position of these Colleges has been attended with very different results in the two countries. In Scotland, the broad view taken by the College of Surgeons of its functions has enabled it to compensate in some degree for the want of a strictly medical licensee emanating from a



professional corporation. In England, on the other hand, the indifference of the College of Physicians to the fate of the general practitioner has had the effect of raising up a powerful trading corporation into a position of legal privilege, which has made it virtually the guardian of some of the most important interests of a liberal profession.

It is not intended in these remarks to suggest anything derogatory to the Apothecaries' Company, or to accuse it of having acted otherwise than in a liberal spirit in fulfilling the functions assigned to it by law. The powers of that Society were obtained in 1815, with the concurrence of the College of Physicians of London; and in all that concerns the examination of the general practitioner, it may fairly claim to have done more than any other body to elevate the standard of professional acquirement in England. And it would be wrong not to observe, further, that the conduct of the Apothecaries' Company, in all the more recent negotiations on Medical Reform, has been marked by the greatest courtesy and liberality towards the strictly professional corporations.

Such were the relations of the profession, in England and in Scotland, to the colleges and licensing corporations up to the present year. But these relations have been greatly changed by the Act passed in the last session of Parliament.

The Medical Act of 1858 has rendered the licence to practise, of each college, corporation, or university in the kingdom valid in every part of it; and has destroyed the monopoly exercised by some of the corporations in England. But, by requiring that medical and surgical qualifications shall be separately registered, the Act virtually declares that the licence of a College of Surgeons shall no longer be regarded as sufficient for general practice, at least in the case of persons holding appointments that imply medical duties. The Medical Act, therefore,

raises up once more, in a form that cannot be evaded, the question of the duty of the Colleges of Physicians towards the general practitioner. And in Scotland this question will ere long become one of peculiar urgency, owing to the fact that the qualification hitherto held by a large number of practitioners of the highest respectability has been that of a College of Surgeons only.

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh has acted, in these novel circumstances, in accordance with its own established precedents, and its carefully considered views of sound policy. It has determined to grant a separate licence in medicine, in accordance with the Medical Act, on terms which will place a medical qualification from the College within the reach of well educated medical students in every school in the kingdom; and it has entered into arrangements with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and with the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, to confer (subject to the approval of the Medical Council) a Double Qualification in Medicine and Surgery, when required.

In conferring its Diploma for the important purposes above referred to, the Edinburgh College necessarily comes into collision with that view of policy which would reserve the title of Licentiate of a College of Physicians for the pure physician, as such. The ideas on which this view is founded have long been current in England, where a sharp line of distinction has generally been drawn, and barriers, difficult to overleap, have been placed by the course of legislation between the physician and the general practitioner. The Edinburgh College, however, may reasonably refuse to be tried by principles which it has never acknowledged, but against which, on the contrary, all its recent acts and declarations have been a virtual protest. The London College has always aimed, more or less consistently, at being a College exclusively of pure physicians.

The Edinburgh College has never, or at least not for many years, had this object in view. The London College has endeavoured to keep its Fellows a small body; the Edinburgh College has aimed at enlarging the Fellowship so as to include all men of unblemished character and of unimpeachable qualification, to whom that title might be an object. The London College has thus, by its exclusive regulations as regards the Fellowship, detained in the ranks of its Licentiates precisely those men whom it has been for long the system of the Edinburgh College to admit to the higher grade.

The complications thus induced are, unquestionably, likely to be a source of some embarrassment to the Royal College of Physicians of London in carrying out the evident purposes of the Medical Act. That Act allows no other titles than Licentiate, Member, and Fellow, to persons receiving their qualification as practitioners of medicine from a College of Physicians; nor can such persons be registered under any other titles. The Edinburgh College, therefore, in reviving an order of Licentiates, in accordance with the provisions of the Medical Act, is plainly not bound to fetter itself by precedents which its London sister, acting upon a different view of duty, had thought fit to adopt long before that Act was contemplated. In Scotland there is no Apothecaries' Company. The connection of the general practitioner with the medical corporations, therefore, can only be secured in Scotland by the aid of the College of Physicians. And by thus identifying itself for the future with the interests of the profession at large, the Edinburgh College has the satisfaction of following a course clearly marked out by legislation, and one which must be followed, at no long interval, by the sister Colleges.

III. A large proportion of the criticisms that have

been circulated in certain quarters, as regards the Edinburgh College, have been directed against the proceedings under that part of their regulations which relates to the 'year of grace.'

The 'year of grace,' however, was not an invention of the Edinburgh College. It was a confession of past exclusiveness, an opening of the door to those who had been prevented from getting in at the right time, adopted and announced, in the first instance, by the London College. All the Colleges of Physicians have felt the necessity of some movement of this kind, in consideration of the altered relations of the profession under the Medical Act. All of them have considered it expedient to do a graceful act of justice to men who had been virtually excluded from their licence, but who might deem it very desirable, under the new system, to connect themselves with a College of Physicians. This act of grace, or of justice, however, has been carried out by each College on a different principle.

The Royal College of Physicians of London has determined to exempt all graduates in Medicine, indiscriminately, from examination; submitting their individual claims to scrutiny, under the protection of a ballot against incompetent persons. This partiality for graduates is wholly unintelligible in Scotland, where it is well known that Licentiates of the Scottish medical corporations have always been qualified for practice by an amount of study wider in range than that of several of the Scottish Universities, and by examinations, always including Medicine, which have had the reputation of being quite as stringent as those of the universities. To have passed over these gentlemen therefore, and at the same time to have given admission to graduates of the Scottish Universities without examination, would have been an act, not of 'grace,' but of real injustice to the general practitioner. It is, in fact, well known that by far the greater number of the graduates of



the Universities of Scotland are general practitioners; and to offer to them a title not offered on equal terms to Licentiates of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, would have been a wholly undeserved disparagement of the professional status of the latter, which it would have been most unbecoming in the College of Physicians of Edinburgh to affirm.

The College was, therefore, in this position. For many years it had allowed its licencee to fall into desuetude, partly on account of difficulties connected with the stamp-duty, and partly because the Fellowship of the College of Physicians had always been sufficiently accessible to those aspiring to the position of physicians, properly so called. But under the Medical Act it became a probable, or at least a possible thing, that a new qualification in Medicine might become desirable, or even necessary, not only to those who were in the position of students, but to some who had been long and honourably engaged in practice, and who could not, with propriety be asked to become students again, and to pass renewed examinations. To meet the difficulties and hardships, therefore, attendant on a period of transition, the Edinburgh College agreed, under certain circumstances, and in favour of persons otherwise qualified by a recognised licensing body, to confer its Diploma, for a limited period, without that examination which will afterwards be held as indispensable. A careful scrutiny of individual qualifications, with a decision by ballot as to the admissibility of the candidate, have been substituted, in such circumstances, for the examination-test; and, in strict consistency with the previous scheme of the College, it was determined that the provisions of the 'year of grace' should be largely extended to the existing 'general practitioner,' as the licencee of the College was intended in future to apply, not to the consulting physician, but to the ordinary practitioner of medi-



cine. One condition, indeed, the College determined to apply in every case. The candidate was required to sign a declaration that he did not 'derive a profit from the sale of drugs or medicine;' the connection with a College of Physicians being held to imply remuneration for advice, and not for physic.

Such were the principles upon which the College proceeded. It was, however, unfortunately, obliged to proceed alone, and without concert with the London College: partly because the fundamental idea of the two corporations was widely different, and partly because the attempt to institute a conference, made in good faith by the President of the Edinburgh College at an early stage of the proceedings, was not reciprocated in the way which was expected, and consequently failed in leading to the institution of a common principle of action for the two Colleges.

The announcement of the new regulations for the conferring of the licence by the Edinburgh College has certainly been followed by a rather startling and unlooked-for result. A very large majority of the applications came from England: and that so immediately, as to constitute a positive source of embarrassment in dealing with them. It had been believed by the Council that the large sum demanded by the Government as stamp-duty would, in the first instance at least, have operated as a check upon the eagerness of English practitioners to enrol themselves as Licentiates, and that time and opportunity would probably still be afforded for carefully reconsidering the working of the 'year of grace,' in concert with the London College. This expectation has been frustrated by the circumstances already alluded to, and by the prejudices carefully stirred up in certain quarters, as a source of discord between the two Colleges. The Council will not cease to regret it, if any want of caution on their part should have given occasion for these unfavourable remarks; but they believe it would

have been impossible for any system of proceeding, which had the practical effect of throwing open the licence of a College of Physicians to the general practitioner in a fair and equitable manner, to have escaped the criticisms which have been passed upon the regulations of the Edinburgh College.

Among these criticisms, one or two are so absurd and so injurious as to demand special notice. It has been again and again asserted that the new Licentiates are admitted merely on a payment of money. This assertion, which the Council observe to have been lately repeated at the meeting of the British Medical Association, on the faith of a most unjustifiably erroneous statement of a Fellow of the College, shows how difficult it is, in the midst of changes causing so much excitement and difference of opinion, to procure a fair hearing for the simple truth. The real proceeding is as follows:—The names are submitted to a scrutiny conducted by the Council, with the aid of documents forwarded by the candidate, including a statement of his entire professional career, and attestations from men of credit and standing in the medical profession. Such of the names as the Council cannot recommend on the ground of character or of qualification, are laid aside until private communications have passed between the Secretary of the College and the applicant; the ultimate result being, that almost all of these names have been spontaneously withdrawn. The residual names are then reported to the College, with the approval or disapproval of the Council; and, finally, a ballot is taken, in which, according to the laws, at least two-thirds of the Fellows must concur to admit the candidate.

It is to be hoped that, on this subject, necessarily one of great delicacy, and one on which the Council are bound to exercise some degree of reserve, the statements of heated partizans will no longer be received as those of im-

partial witnesses. It is a simple fact, that a large number of applications have been virtually set aside by the scrutiny of the Council; and of these only a very few ever reached the College itself. Of those which were brought before the College, the greater number were, as might have been expected, favourably received. In exercising the important duty confided to them by the College, the Council are quite prepared to believe that they have been, in a few instances, misled. They are, however, conscious of having made every effort that appeared possible in the circumstances to avoid error; and they have carefully availed themselves of every suggestion arising out of past experience.

The Council have repeatedly had under their anxious consideration the case of those Licentiates of corporations who, though admitted on the Medical Register, and *de facto* engaged in medical practice, have not passed examinations in Medicine. It has been remarked above that no such cases exist in Scotland, where all Licentiates of corporations are, and have always been, duly examined in Medicine as well as in Surgery. It is well known, however, that in England members of the Royal College of Surgeons are largely engaged in general practice all over the country and hold a professional status, in many instances not inferior, in some superior, to that of Licentiates of the Society of Apothecaries. The Council have found themselves obliged to recognise the claims of some of these gentlemen. They have not done so, however, without special care taken to ascertain that the position of those recommended was in the eyes of their professional brethren unquestionable; and care has been taken also, to ascertain that their opportunities of practising Medicine, as distinguished from Surgery, have been such as to entitle them to consideration. And among other requisitions the Council have of late refused to recommend such candidates

without an examination in Medicine, unless they had attained the age of thirty years, and been engaged for at least six years in the general practice of the profession.

Notwithstanding these precautions, and notwithstanding their belief that very few candidates have been admitted under the privileges of the 'year of grace' who will not amply justify their election, the Council confess that they are not without misgivings as to the extension of the whole of these privileges to such cases as those referred to above. On the one hand, it may be urged that, to examine members of the College of Surgeons of England in Medicine, while the Licentiates of the Edinburgh College are exempted from such examination, is to make a very invidious distinction between the two Colleges. On the other hand, it is unquestionably the fact, that the Licentiates of the Edinburgh College have, while the members of the London College have not, passed the ordeal of an examination in that which constitutes the greater part of general practice; and therefore it may be reasonably argued that a distinction ought to be made on this ground. The Council have been led mainly by opinions emanating from England, to reconsider this point; and they have passed a resolution, in virtue of which they will, for the present, decline to recommend for election any applicants for the licence of the College, in regard to whom they shall not have been satisfied that examinations in Medicine have been passed at the time of taking some previous qualification to practise. This will leave it open to practitioners in the position referred to, to come up to Edinburgh for an examination in Medicine only, and thus to secure, if otherwise well qualified and approved after examination, the recommendation of the Council.

In name and by authority of the Council,

(Signed) D. R. HALDANE, *Hon. Sec.*

Physicians Hall Edinburgh, July 30th, 1859.



# THE EDINBURGH EXPLANATION.

(From 'The Lancet,' August 13, 1859.)

The Council of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh are just now fighting the battle of common-sense in the profession. They have taken up the sword for the *plebs*; and if they wield it manfully, and with frank and valorous mien, there can be no question of the result. They have offered to the general practitioner of the United Kingdom a means for placing himself on a professional level, so far as title and degree can go, with the magnates of the profession. It is very right that such a door should be opened; but it is also right that only those who are worthy, and can approve themselves fit companions, be admitted. Of the cold exclusiveness which would affirm that the designation of doctor or physician is inapplicable to the general practitioner, we can but express our profound disapproval. It is the function and the duty which hallow that title; and to assume that the licentiate of a college, the member of a corporation, or graduate of a university robs himself of the right to the name of doctor or physician by practising the general duties of his profession, instead of confining himself to consulting practice, is an absurdity which is not likely to be ratified by the general voice of the profession, and one to which the public will never practically give confirmation. The fact is that the distinctions between graduates, members, and licentiates of the various corporations are very fairly represented by the respective letters which these gentlemen are authorized to place after their names; and the general term of doctor is one which public usage will long continue to bestow upon every member of the medical profession. The Council of the Edinburgh College hint at this very intelligibly in their explanatory minute. The Council will be borne out by the great body of the profession in their recent measure, so far as it tends to bring in unison with them a larger number of their *confrères*. The tendency of the day is towards a general union, and the creation of one faculty. Those who aim at eternally perpetuating differences and distinctions of an arbitrary nature, do not comprehend their own interests or those of the profession.



# OBSERVATIONS

BY THE

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,

RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW EXAMINING BOARDS, PROPOSED  
TO THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL BY ITS COMMITTEE ON  
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, 1869.

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THE Senatus Academicus of this University having had under their consideration that part of the Report of the Committee of the General Medical Council on Professional Education (1869) which relates to the proposal to establish a new Examining Board for each division of the kingdom, have now, in compliance with the request of the Committee, to submit their observations on that proposal.

The proposed scheme, as contained in the 22nd clause of the Report, will at once sweep away, as licenees, the whole of those qualifications to practise by the possession of which the members of the medical profession in the three kingdoms are now recognised by law, and by which they are known to the public to be members of that profession.

Before a scheme so sweeping and revolutionary can be considered as called for, it is necessary in the first place to be assured that it is required in order to remedy the deficiencies of the present system of admission into the profession. These are generally admitted to be the existence of incomplete, or half, qualifications; that the student, in order to obtain a complete qualification, is subjected to the inconvenience and expense of having to go before two separate Boards, one giving the Medical the other the Surgical half of the qualification which he requires in order to render him, in the eye of the law, fully qualified for practice; and that the Boards conferring the right to practise are too numerous.

But these objections to the present system, however much they apply to the state of matters in England, do not apply to Scotland. What is commonly known as the Double Qualification (more correctly, Half Qualification) clause (31) of the Medical Act of 1858, was not introduced at the instance of the Medical Bodies of Scotland, to whom its interpretation in that sense was a surprise, but in the interests of the London Corporations. The objections to such a system were so evident that the Medical and Surgical Corporations of Scotland lost no time in availing themselves of the combination clause (19) of the Medical Act to establish, with the sanction of the Medical Council, a joint examination by which the qualification given is complete; and for the past ten years in Scotland the complete qualification has been conferred by one series of examinations, either by the joint Board formed by the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons conferring the licence in Medicine and Surgery, or by the examination of the Universities conferring the degrees in Medicine and Surgery. But for the technicality of the 31st clause of the Medical Act requiring, legally considered, two half qualifications rather than one complete qualification, it is believed that the Universities would have preferred to give the one degree of Bachelor of Medicine, or Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, but it may be observed that neither degree is conferred without complete education and examination in all the branches both of Medicine and Surgery. The London University has since instituted also a degree in Surgery, in order to enable it, like other Universities, to confer a qualification in Surgery as well as in Medicine. Had the example of the Corporations of Scotland been in like manner followed by the corresponding Corporations in England, the evils now complained of in England would have been removed. The 19th clause of the Medical Act of 1858 provides that "Any  
 " two or more of the colleges and bodies in the United King-  
 " dom mentioned in Schedule (A) to this Act may, with the  
 " sanction and under the direction of the General Council,  
 " unite or co-operate in conducting the examinations required  
 " for qualifications to be registered under this Act." No new legislation, therefore, is necessary in order to carry out this consolidation, the sanction of the Medical Council being all that is

wanted, and no satisfactory reason has been given why the London Corporations should not thus combine to form a joint examination. In the event of these Corporations still declining to adopt this method of putting an end to the grievances complained of by the English student, the Medical Council would then be justified in asking the authority of Parliament to establish a Board in their place.

By thus combining the Bodies which can now give only incomplete qualifications, a Board would be formed in each division of the kingdom conferring a complete qualification, and the number of licensing Bodies would be considerably reduced. Thus the object may be attained through existing institutions, without disturbing the titles by which the members of the profession are recognised, and without new legislation, and if this is possible, it will be admitted that it is no light matter to be able so to accomplish it, even at the risk of some little delay. It might be well, in an amended Act, which may be required in order to deal with other matters than licensing, to insert a clause forbidding the registration of incomplete qualifications, but even this might be unnecessary were the licensing Bodies to agree, at the request of the Medical Council, to require that the first examination which the candidate undergoes shall be that for the complete qualification.

The proposed new Board, besides being uncalled for, is open to objection when the effect which it would have on existing institutions is considered. The consequences would probably be different in the different divisions of the kingdom. It is doubtful whether the establishment of the new Board in England, instead of diminishing the number of examinations, would not rather in most cases be found to have added another to their number. It might be found that the long established custom of recognising the members of the profession by titles derived from their connection with certain Corporations, was too strong to be resisted, and that the possessors of the new and nameless licence were under so strong an inducement to take the diplomas of the Corporations, that all who could afford the money would do so.

The effect on the Corporations of Physicians and Surgeons



of Scotland and of Ireland would, on the contrary, in all probability, from the circumstances of these countries, be very injurious. It cannot be considered desirable to destroy or discourage institutions which have proved so beneficial, and in the event of their being, as alleged in the name of the public interest, deprived of the privilege of licensing, it is not unreasonable to expect that Government will be prepared to undertake the support of the Museums and Libraries which these Bodies have maintained, when it has withdrawn the funds by which they are now supported.

The connection of the English Universities with the medical profession, in so far as medical education and licensing are concerned, is so slender that the proposed scheme could inflict but little if any injury on them. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge give medical education to few, and to these few only in part, while to those who graduate in Medicine at these Universities, the necessity of taking a previous qualification would scarcely be a change from the present custom. The University of London, being only an Examining Board, has no educational interests to suffer injury, and any diminution in the number of its candidates for medical graduation, consequent on their having to incur the expense of taking the diploma of the new Board, could scarcely be regarded as serious by an institution which is maintained by Government.

It is very different with the Universities of Scotland. They are important medical schools as well as licensing institutions, and educate not only the bulk of the profession in Scotland, but have educated a considerable number of the practitioners of England, and of the medical officers in the public services. Our students have the honourable ambition of endeavouring to enter the profession by a higher qualification than the mere licensee to practise, and of obtaining not only a University degree, but the degree of the University at which they obtained their education and with which their associations are connected; and the combined result of our system of education and examination is such that our graduates not only pass but distinguish themselves highly at the public competitions for the various services, while a large number of those who have already

obtained the licences of the Corporations are rejected as unfit to enter the public services.

But if our students are compelled to take the licence of the Board under the proposed scheme, the effect will be to discourage University graduation, both by the additional expenses, which would be felt in a country where money is not so rife as it is in England, and by the inconveniences of having to pass at two different Boards. The result would be, that, with such a prospect before them, many would have to remain content with the mere licence to practise, with its lower preliminary examination in general education, its more limited education in the sciences on which medicine is founded, and its less careful professional examinations.\* Thus, in so far as it would affect the medical

\* The following are the Examinations for the Medical Degrees of this University.

(A) *Preliminary Examination in General Education*.—In English, Latin, Arithmetic, the Elements of Mathematics, the Elements of Mechanics, and in at least two of the following subjects—Greek, French, German, Higher Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural History, Logic, Moral Philosophy. This is for the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Master in Surgery. Those who proceed to the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, which cannot be till two years after taking the Degree of Bachelor of Medicine, and until the candidate is 24 years of age, must have passed in three of the above optional subjects, two of which must be Greek and either Logic or Moral Philosophy.

(B) *Professional Examinations*—1. The *First Professional Examination*, at the end of the second year of professional study—on Chemistry, Botany, Elementary Anatomy, and Materia Medica.

2. The *Second Professional Examination*, at the end of the third year, on Advanced Anatomy, Zoology with Comparative Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery.

3. The *Third Professional Examination*, at the end of the fourth year, on Practice of Medicine, Clinical Medicine, Clinical Surgery, Midwifery, General Pathology, and Medical Jurisprudence.

There is a written and an oral examination in each subject of each Examination. There are eleven days of written examination, occupying from three to four hours each day. The oral examinations, extending over three days, are conducted as far as possible by demonstrations of objects exhibited to the candidates; and the Clinical Examinations are conducted in the Royal Infirmary. A Thesis is also required to be given in, on a subject selected by the candidate. The Examinations are held twice a-year, viz.—at the end of the Winter and Summer Sessions.



profession in Scotland, and others sent out by the Scottish Universities, the result of the proposed scheme would be either to lower, instead of raising, the standard of general and professional education, or merely that another examination and a new burden had been imposed.

It is easy to speak of the proposed scheme as aiming at a high and uniform examination. But, as the examination is one which it is proposed that all shall pass, it could not well be termed a high examination, nor indeed could it come up to the level even of an average, or to a higher level than that which the least educated members of the profession had been able to pass. By whatever name it might be called, it would, therefore, be undeniably a minimum examination, and when it must be so, little would remain to be said for the uniformity, except that, in so far at least as it concerns Scotland, the uniformity would be attained by levelling downwards.

The discouragement to University graduation thus caused would react injuriously on our Universities. The attendance of students looking forward to the degree is such as to induce Professors to devote themselves entirely or largely to the work of the School; this has its natural influence on the character of the education; and the Libraries, Museums, and various means of practical training which our students enjoy, are maintained by the revenue which the Universities derive from being licensing institutions. Thus the prosperity and usefulness of the Scotch Universities—the attendance of students, the character of the teaching, the position of the Professors, the maintenance of the Libraries and Museums, all depend largely on their being licensing as well as teaching institutions. The system is one not to be overturned lightly, and if there must be assimilation, it is maintained that the Scottish system of medical education and examination is in advance of the English, and, of the two, the more deserving of being selected as the model.

It is reasonable, therefore, whatever arrangement may be made for rendering complete, in each division of the kingdom, the mere licence to practise, that those who prefer to enter the profession by passing through the higher education and examination of the Universities, should be allowed, and in-

deed encouraged, to do so, and ought not to be subjected to the expense and inconvenience of having to take a minimum qualification in addition to their University degrees.

As the effect of the proposed scheme in its relation to University graduation generally, would be either to lay an additional burden on the University graduate, or to discourage graduation, it is hoped that a system which would be attended by such results is not likely to meet with the approval of the Medical Council, or to be looked on with favour by Government. On referring to the third Appendix attached to the Report of the Committee, containing an account of the systems followed in France and in Germany, it will be seen that in these countries the recognition of the Universities is very different from that which the scheme proposes for this country—that in France there are no other examinations than those of the University, conducted by the medical professors in Paris, Montpellier, and Strasburg, the state merely issuing the diploma on the recommendation of the professors; while in Germany, before admission to the Staat's Examen, every candidate is required to bring up his University degree—the Universities, through their professors, being in either case the institutions employed by the state, which thus takes up a position of support, not of antagonism, to the Universities.

It has been objected to the Scottish University examinations that they are conducted by the professors. The examinations are not now conducted by the professors only, but also by examiners who are not professors, three of whom were added to the Examining Board of each University by the Commission under the Scottish Universities Act of 1858. No Examining Board, it may be observed, from which teachers are excluded, will be efficient, experience showing that such Boards, as might be expected, fall behind the Schools. But in the event of its being considered that the number of non-professorial examiners should be increased, the professors in this University will welcome the addition, provided that the expense be borne by Government, the University having no funds for the purpose, and that the remuneration be such as to induce men of ability and scientific distinction to undertake the duty. This might be done either by increasing the number in each University, or by the present non-professorial

examinerships being made common to the Scotch Universities, and at the same time more remunerative, on account of the increased work. It may be well to mention that the professors in the Scotch Universities receive no remuneration as examiners for degrees, the work being regarded as part of their duty; and that the non-professorial examiners are remunerated by Government by a salary which is fixed, not depending on the number of candidates examined, or on the number passed or rejected.

The system of occasional visitation of the various Examinations by members of the Medical Council, has to a certain extent proved beneficial in some instances, but little can be expected from it so long as funds are not provided for the remuneration of the visitors. This is understood to be the reason why the Council has not yet, although it has authority to do so by the 18th clause of the Medical Act, appointed persons not of its own number to discharge that important duty. It is strongly urged on the Council to apply to Government for funds to accomplish this object. The remuneration would require to be such as to induce men of proved ability and attainment to undertake the duty. The Inspectors should be present at every examination which confers the licence to practise, and should report annually, or more frequently if they saw fit, to the Medical Council. From such a system of inspection, and from the publication of the reports, very satisfactory results may be expected; abuses, if they exist, would disappear, many improvements would be introduced, and it would be known which of the Licensing Boards are most worthy of public confidence and support.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,  
*February 15, 1870.*



